

Message Text

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53

ACTION NEA-09

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 IO-10 ISO-00 SAM-01 SAB-01 CIAE-00

DODE-00 PM-03 H-01 INR-07 L-02 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01

PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 ACDA-05 OMB-01 SCCT-01 NIC-01

SSO-00 NSCE-00 INRE-00 CCO-00 /079 W

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P R 241715Z FEB 75

FM AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS

TO /SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 2748

INFO AMEMBASSY ABU DHABI

AMEMBASSY ALGIERS

AMEMBASSY AMMAN

AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

AMEMBASSY CAIRO

AMEMBASSY DOHA

AMCONSUL JERUSALEM

AMEMBASSY JIDDA

AMEMBASSY KUWAIT

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY MANAMA

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY RABAT

AMEMBASSY SANAA

AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

AMEMBASSY TRIPOLI

AMEMBASSY TUNIS

USIA WASHDC

USMISSION GENEVA

USMISSION USUN

C O N F I D E N T I A L DAMASCUS 682

BEIRUT PASS BAGHDAD

GENEVA FOR MEPC DEL

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E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, XF, SY

SUBJ: SYRIAN CONSULTATIONS ON MIDDLE EAST SITUATION

1. SYRIAN FONMIN KHADDAM HAS BEEN AIRBORNE PRACTICALLY CONTINUOUSLY SINCE SECRETARY'S DEPARTURE FROM DAMASCUS FEB 13. IN ADDITION TO DELIVERING MESSAGES FROM PRESIDENT ASAD TO NUMBER OF ARAB HEADS OF STAT IN GULF AND ALGERIA, HE VISITED AMMAN FEB 22-23 FOR CONSULTATIONS WITH KING HUSSEIN AND PM RIFAI. RETURNING TO DAMASCUS HE MET FEB 24 WITH PLO CHAIRMAN 'ARAFAT ACCORDING TO DAMASCUS RADIO TO DISCUSS AGENDA FOR ARAB QUADRIPARTITE COORDINATION CONFERENCE (EGYPT, JORDAN, SYRIA AND PLO) AND OBTAINED PLO'S AGREEMENT TO IT. IN HIS MESSAGE TO ARAB LEAGUE SECRETARY-GENERAL RIAD REQUESTING CONVENING OF QUADRIPARTITE CONFERENCE, KHADDAM HAD PROPOSED FEB 25 OR MARCH 3 AS ALTERNATIVE DATES.

2. SYRIAN PRESS COMMENTING ON FEB 22 ANNIVERSARY OF THE 1958 ESTABLISHMENT OF SYRIAN-EGYPTIAN UNITY STRESSED CONTINUING NECESSITY FOR ARAB UNITY IN CURRENT SITUATION. IN VEILED REFERENCE TO EGYPT, AL-THAWRA WARNED AGAINST NARROW, PURELY NATIONALIST POLICIES AND STATED THAT ANY STATE TEMPTED BY CHOICE OF SAFETY IN ISOLATION WOULD BE PLAYING INTO HANDS OF THOSE TRYING TO DIVIDE ARABS. SYRIA, ARTICLE ASSERTED, WILL REJECT ANY OFFER OF SAFETY NOT BASED ON A UNIFIED ARAB POSITION. OTHER ARTICLES IN FEB 23-24 PRESS CHARACTERIZED COMING STAGE IN MIDDLE EAST AS "DECISIVE" AND CALLED ON ARABS TO MAINTAIN SOLIDARITY AND COMMITMENT TO DECISIONS OF RABAT SUMMIT. AL-BAATH EDITOR FALHUT URGED FIRM REJECTION OF ANY PARTIAL OR SEPARATE SETTLEMENT.

3. COMMENT: AIM OF CURRENT SYRIAN WAVE OF DIPLOMATIC ACTIVITY AND INITIATIVE APPEARS TO BE TO INCREASE ARAB PRESSURE ON EGYPT. SYRIANS HOPE MAKE IT DIFFICULT FOR SADAT TO CONCLUDE PURELY CONFIDENTIAL

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BILATERAL AGREEMENT, AS NEXT STAGE OF NEGOTIATION APPROACHES, AND BRING HIM TO INSIST ON FURTHER ISRAELI CONCESSIONS ON SYRIAN AND "PALESTINIAN" FRONTS AS WELL AS EGYPTIAN FRONT. IT IS NOTEWORTHY THAT SYRIANS HAVE NOT SOUGHT RAPPROCHEMENT WITH IRAQ OR SHIFT TO JOIN "REJECTIONIST FRONT", AS SOME OBSERVERS WERE PREDICTING AT TIME OF SECRETARY'S FEB 13 VISIT, IN ATTEMPT TO BLOCK ISRAELI-EGYPTIAN

ACCORD. RATHER, THEY APPEAR TO BE TAKING MORE
POSITIVE LINE OF ENLISTING ARAB ALLIES BEHIND
ATTEMPT TO GET AS MUCH AS POSSIBLE FOR SYRIA AND
THE PLO OUT OF COMING ISRAELI-EGYPTIAN NEGOTIATIONS.
MURPHY

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